TUEBOR

We Will Protect

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Preventing Kids From Becoming Criminals

CHILD DEVELOPMENT — COMMUNITY POLICING

Over three million children are at risk of exposure to parental violence, abuse, or neglect each year.
The Federal Bureau of Investigation

Experiencing childhood abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53 percent.
The National Institute of Justice

Some children fall in a high-risk group for future offenders — those that have, in some way, been abused or exposed to violence. (See a related article, "The Breakdown of Conscience," in the Fall 1998 Tuebor.) One of the best methods of crime prevention is to get these high-risk children into therapy as soon as possible — as well as their family, if possible. In fact, therapy can help even if the child has already become delinquent.

Unfortunately, getting high-risk kids and parents into therapy often does not happen. There are many instance where they fall between the cracks. For example, child protective service agencies can assert their authority when a child's welfare is at risk, but not when the child is only a witness or when there is insufficient evidence of a crime. Police officers provide information which tells where psychological services are available, but most often nobody does anything to follow up. A lot of times, police feel they have no option but to turn their head.

To more assertively help kids get into therapy, the New Haven Department of Police Services and Yale University Child Study Center developed a model intervention program. Called

Police Intervention is more than just handing out a piece of paper — it means personally making sure kids get the help they need.

"Child Development — Community Policing (CD-CP)," a summary of the project was recently published in a book called *The Police-Mental Health Partnership*. The following excerpt illustrates their case:

"A clinician and a sergeant spent an evening shift together responding to a series of calls regarding domestic disputes. The last call of the evening came from a twenty-three-year-old woman who had been beaten by her boyfriend. She screamed a litany of obscenities and revenge fantasies at the officers who took her complaint, while two young children anxiously clung to her side. When the sergeant commented about how upsetting the violence was for the children, the mother stopped screaming and began to talk about her four-year-old son's fears, nightmares, and aggressive behavior. The mother accepted the clinician's offer of a follow-up visit to discuss the child's experience and needs, and then suggested that she was about to leave her children to go to a bar. As the sergeant and the clinician drove away, the sergeant observed the clinician staring out the window. The sergeant commented, 'You see some of these people in your office . . . maybe once a week. We see those kids all the time.'"

An Active Link To Therapy

Obviously, police intervention is more than just handing out a piece of paper. If "Child Development — Community Policing" is to work, police and therapists need to be trained together, forming a close working fellowship. It means getting high-risk kids into therapy even if you have to make the appointment for them and provide the transportation. Here are the comments of Trooper Geoff Flohr, MSP Jackson Post, one officer who has been successful building such a program:

"It's no secret, the investigation isn't finished until the child gets into a therapeutic setting where they can talk about their experiences. I have a network of therapists here in Jackson, one who is free through our Sexual Assault Center, and the Family Independence Agency will pay for a therapist if any allegations are substantiated. But most parents, if they are non-offending, will do anything to get their kids help. So I usually have no problem getting these kids into therapy. This is the icing on the cake of the investigation. Anti-social behaviors become less actualized as they are allowed to express their emotions

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in a safe environment. This means the kid is less likely to be arrested later."

Under the CD-CP model, a successful intervention program takes five steps:

1. Participating clinicians familiarize all rank and file officers with symptoms of psychological disturbance, methods of intervention, and treatment.
2. In turn, police provide clinicians with opportunities to ride-along in squad cars, taking calls.
3. Together, clinicians and police hold a seminar to discuss case scenarios, becoming more comfortable applying this process in their everyday work.
4. After the program begins, specific clinicians and police supervisors are on call 24 hours a day to discuss difficult situations.
5. Police and clinicians have weekly meetings to discuss cases, make improvements, and explore issues.

POLICE LEGITIMACY

According to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), "the most promising approach to community policing is also the most theoretically coherent." Based on two decades of study, a growing body of research suggests that "police legitimacy" prevents crime. To be more precise, how police treat someone in an initial encounter could dramatically affect that person's later willingness to obey the law. Or, as another study shows, when police show respect to high-risk kids, the kids increase their respect for the law and the police. (See a related article on Police Legitimacy in this issue.)

Projecting Moral Images

It is critical that police cultivate an image with youth that will set the stage for future contact and behavior. But this is easier said than done.

According to Dr. William Kilpatrick, author of *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right From Wrong,* youngsters suffer from too much exposure to the junk values and images of popular culture. To counter this, police need to project an alternative and more appealing image that combines skill, toughness and goodness. Fortunately, this doesn't require a lot of imagination since a police officer has something that is absolutely intriguing to youngsters of all ages: What it's like to be a cop! In an excerpt from Kilpatrick's book, a Michigan teacher describes a police officer who was successful in communicating with his fifth-grade class:

"The kids knew he (Officer Norris) cared about them and that they could trust him. By the time he was done, my students thought that anyone using drugs was ignorant, and, to use their term, 'scum.' My point is that Al Norris changed the norms within our school."

Many police in-school programs could be improved if police refrained from "preaching" at youngsters and instead told interesting stories of cops doing the right things. The values and character requirements embodied in our public norms can be communicated best when stories are used to create an emotional attachment to them. By utilizing icons of police work (the uniform, squad car, K-9, etc.), officers can help enlist youthful passions against unethical behavior.

Building An Ethos

To supplement school prevention seminars, Dr. Kilpatrick advocates Police Cadet or Explorer programs. One advantage of such programs is that they are ongoing, offering prolonged contact with police officers. These are the comments of Trooper Corey Hebner, MSP Detroit Post, who has helped set-up two Boy Scout Police Explorer groups:

"I now have about 20 kids who are very enthusiastic, and three or four troopers that are advisors. The group meets one night every other week for two hours. As an advisor there are certain requirements that B.S.A. wants you to meet. I feel all the time put into the program is worth it. You just never know the difference you might make!"

Explorers introduce kids to all phases of police work. Kilpatrick says that the idea is to create an ethos — a sense of esprit de corps. Such an ethos is created by: conveying a vision of high purpose, creating a sense of pride through tradition and high expectations, providing physical and mental training that results in real self-achievement, and demonstrating a wise use of authority which builds respect. As further reinforcement, group members are asked to help in a variety of civic activities.

Breaking Down Barriers

Of course, there are "tough" kids who will not participate in voluntary programs. Police should not give up on them. In fact, Derrick McCondichie of the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility arranges for police officers to come in and just talk with young offenders. McCondichie says:

"We hold a wide range of offenders, including those who have committed serious felonies. Still, they are surprisingly naive about the law since most are first time offenders. They all have false impressions: that police are not interested in their well-being, that police are just into busting them, beating them up — the brutality thing. But Trooper Hebner is able to come in here and captivate them. He comes in here and talks to them about crime, like drunk driving, and they listen. He spends a lot of time just answering their questions. This is a real relationship builder, it breaks down barriers."

Police programs for high-risk kids also provides troubled boys with the strong male role-models that they need, as this inadequacy is one primary cause of delinquency. In regards to mentoring high-risk youth, studies show that police establish the most legitimacy when they include *indirect* counseling — just taking time to "listen" to these kids tell their stories. Listening demonstrates an element of caring and commitment that can profoundly improve how high-risk kids think about the law, the police and their message.

CONCLUSION

No one program can possibly solve the many social problems that have plagued us for so long. However, police should continue to seek ways to take advantage of their first responder status to prevent the fall of youngster into an immoral or criminal lifestyle. In addition, as one of the "last action heroes," police need to protect and maximize their image so that they can inspire youngsters to behave like them.

The Legitimacy Equation

"An important part of police work is best assessed through police-citizen encounters, which have four aspects — fairness, civility, concern, and apparent effort."

Measuring What Matters
National Institute of Justice: Nov. 1997

Legitimacy in law enforcement is defined as the credibility and trust that the public places in the police and the laws they enforce. Police often refer to legitimacy as their image or reputation. Unfortunately, police officers often hold theories about legitimacy that are counter-productive. They often think that their official status is enough to communicate their legitimacy. When the public complains, police owe it to the fact that citizens just don't understand what they do. In other words, many police believe that other people's ignorance leads to negative stereotypes of law enforcement. The obvious solution is for *other* people to change their attitudes.

We don't deny there may be some truth to this theory. After all, many people do have incorrect or bad attitudes about police. But if police want to improve their credibility, they must acknowledge that it is their character, their image, and *their* problem, and, therefore, it is up to them to take the first steps toward change.

EXPERTISE + RELIABILITY = LEGITIMACY

First it should be understood that there are two major elements to legitimacy: perceived *expertise* and perceived *reliability*. Both are necessary. Good training usually takes care of expertise. Unfortunately, establishing reliability is often neglected by police. This is damaging because expertise alone will not inspire legitimacy. In fact, most people will not credit another's expertise until the latter has established reliability. Research has identified four important dimensions of perceived reliability: fairness, civility, concern, and apparent effort.

Fairness

Being fair means more than just enforcing the law equally. There is an image that the public holds of what a fair police officer is like. When police break that image, the public thinks they are unreliable — even if they are doing everything by the book. Everyone knows what this image is, but for some reason there are things that bear reminding:

- Keep a clean, neat appearance.
- Speak politely and clear (don't use jargon or legalese, and never use profanity).
- Show you have faith in the system and your profession (never let a citizen think you are disgruntled with your job or department, even if you did just have a fight with the boss).
- Show that you care. (For example, let them know that you agree that what happened is wrong or unfortunate.)

This list could go on and on.

Civility

Civility can most simply be described as those characteristics that make one likable. Dr. John Maxwell, author, minister and lecturer on leadership, says that the problem with many people is that they just don't want to put forth the effort to be likable. Maxwell tells the story that as a boy he looked in a mirror and realized he wasn't that good looking. He said to himself, "What am I going to do with a face like that?" And he *smiled*. And that helped (Maxwell says it didn't cure him, but it helped). Many officers would also do well if they made the effort to smile occasionally — don't worry, it's not a sign of weakness.

Maxwell says another characteristic of likable people is that they are always showing an interest in the lives of others. On the contrary, unlikable people seem to always talk about themselves.

Concern

Police reliability takes time to develop. It requires cumulative and prolonged contacts where appropriate concern is demonstrated. But how often have we heard that police simply do not communicate often enough with complainants and victims? And when they do communicate, are they listening or talking? It seems that some police officers simply can't listen — only lecture. Try another approach: rather than direct people, guide them. Involve them in the decision making. They will appreciate that you are not imposing your will on them.

Another thing, you should spend more time sitting and listening to people who have been through a traumatic incident. You say, "Ya, I know that." But remember, each person has a different perception of what's traumatic — so be sensitive. The elderly person who just had their mailbox destroyed by some prankster may take it far more seriously than you might expect.

Apparent Effort

Apparent effort is where police often lack the most, usually because they are busy and don't follow-up. Good effort can most easily be demonstrated by consistent behavior — fulfilling commitments and keeping promises. Here are a few suggestions that will help demonstrate effort:

- If you are conducting an investigation, try to allow the complainant to observe some of your work (i.e., dusting for fingerprints, taking photographs). This way they can see first hand what you are doing.
- Schedule a timetable of actions you will perform and then stick to it.
- Establish a regular line of communication. When you say you are going to call — *call*!
- Maintain detailed logs and progress summaries to share with whomever.

In summation, if a citizen does not react in a way you think they should, don't be defensive. Understand it is probably fear or frustration that is inciting their behavior. Police officers face many challenges, but taking care of the public should be their top priority. Reputation must be earned.

see "The Legitimacy Test" on Page 4

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The Legitimacy Test

"In the spring of 1945, around the world, the sight of a twelve-man squad, armed in uniform, brought terror to people's hearts. Whether it was a Red Army squad in Berlin, Leipzig, or Warsaw, or a German squad in Holland, or a Japanese squad in Manila, Seoul, or Beijing, that squad meant rape, pillage, looting, wanton destruction, senseless killing. But there was an exception: a squad of GIs, a sight that brought the biggest smiles you ever saw to people's lips, and joy to their hearts. Around the world this was true, even in Germany, even — after September 1945 — in Japan. This was because GIs meant candy, cigarettes, C-rations, and freedom. America had sent the best of her young men around the world, not to conquer but to liberate, not to terrorize but to help. This was a great moment in our history."

The Victors (1998)
By Historian Stephen E. Ambrose

The recent film *Saving Private Ryan* reminds us of the character that America's "great generation" exhibited during W.W.II. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower may have described legitimacy best when he said: "We shall be guided by certain fixed principles . . . by these rules of conduct, we hope to be known to all peoples." Like the GIs, police pass the legitimacy test only when the populace widely acknowledges their reliability. In other words, they are glad to see them around.

Targeted Selection: A New Approach for Promotion

Michigan Civil Service recently contracted with Development Dimensions International (DDI) to revise the interview portion of the state employee promotional procedure. Called Targeted Selection (TS), this interview process is used by more than 16,000 organizations worldwide.

One of the factors making Targeted Selection a superior interview process is that the system is based on job related criteria. The hiring manager evaluates the responsibilities and duties of the vacant position, identifying the most important of those responsibilities and duties, and then catagorizes them into broad areas of knowledge, skills and abilities, called Dimensions or Competencies.

The selection process involves three steps: the interview, data collection, and integration of data.

The Interview

Each interview lasts one-half to one and a half hours, and is generally conducted by a panel of three people. All candidates for the position are asked the same set of questions, focussing on the candidates past behavior. Questions about the candidates education, work history, and their motivation for seeking the position will be covered.

Data Collection

All data, including information provided by the candidate in the form of letters, resume, answers to the interview questions, and reference information is collected. Each person on the selection committee categorizes this information into the appropriate dimensions. The information is weighted based on the similarity of the information to the position criteria, the recency of the information given, and the importance or impact of the information gathered.

Integration of Data

After each interview, candidates will be given a rating in the identified dimensions by individual panel members. The panel members then discuss the information gathered and explain the reasons for the rating they have given. During this phase of the process, the panel members come to a consensus on the rating for each dimension and a candidate profile is produced. The candidates' profiles are then discussed and compared. The candidate whose profile most closely represents a high-quality match with the job related dimensions will be selected for the position.

How To Prepare

There are three recommendations that DDI has for candidates participating in Targeted Selection interviews: be honest, be yourself, and be ready to talk about a lot of situations in which you were involved that demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are important to the sought after job. For example, if you were applying for a position as a customer service representative some of the questions you might be asked would include:

"Tell me about a time when you effectively handled a customer complaint."

"Describe a situation when you chose to involve others to help solve a customer's problem. What was the customer's problem and how did involving others help?"

Candidates who have been through Targeted Selection interviews often comment that the process is very thorough, allows them to present a great deal of information about themselves, and is more effective than any other interview process they have encountered. MSP and DDI wish you the best of success in your Targeted Selection interviews, and hope this information has helped you better understand the process.

Christina Brandt, DDI, and Insp. Diane DeWitt, MSP Human Resources

The book LANDING THE JOB YOU WANT is an excellent resource for those preparing for a Targeted Selection Interview, and is available at the LERC (517) 322-1976. Hiring managers needing interview guides can contact Susan Ventocilla in the Human Resources Division at (517) 336-6116.